



EBT NEWS

County of Los Angeles
Department of Public
Social Services

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SOFT GO-LIVE A SUCCESS

The "Soft" Go-Live went up in pilot district's Metro East and South Central on Saturday, July 19, 2003 and ran until July 31, 2003. Soft Go Live was the conversion period of cash and food stamp benefits to EBT benefits. During the "Soft" Go-Live period, benefits to all newly approved participants, as well as supplemental issuances to continuing participants, were issued via the EBT card.

Los Angeles County chose mail as the primary method of issuance for conversion with a secondary method of Over-The-Counter (OTC) for the homeless popula-

tion. Participants using a mailing address other than the address of the district office received their EBT card and Personal Identification Number (PIN) by mail. In addition, they received written training materials and a letter regarding optional walk-in training. Homeless participants were assigned appointments by Quest to come into the training sites to receive their card and training materials, select a PIN and participate in training. However, a homeless participant was able to come in anytime during the scheduled participant training and pick up their card, receive training and select a PIN. The training sessions were provided in both English and Spanish. In addition, Quest trainers, State support staff, and County staff were available to answer any questions. EBT Cards that were not picked up by participants were held at the pilot district office so that participants could pick them up by August 15, 2003.

EBT IS HERE



EBT CORNER: IS IT TRUTH OR FICTION?

1. EBT benefits not used by the end of the month are lost. Is this true or false?

False. Any benefits not used in the month they are issued are carried over to the next month and remain in the account until they are used. However, when there is no debit activity to the account for 90 days (that means the EBT card has not been used), the account becomes dormant.

2. Once benefits reach the dormant stage, participants can still get access to their benefits. Is this true or false?

True. Except for GR, after 45 days of no debit activity, participants will receive a Notice of Action advising them to use their EBT card before the 90th day to stop the account from becoming dormant. Once the account is dormant, the account is deactivated until the participant contacts the worker to reactivate the account.

For GR, the cases are terminated for loss of contact when there is no debit activity for two consecutive months.

3. With EBT, direct deposit is not an option for cash participants. Is this true or false?

False. Participants will continue to have the option to use direct deposit for their cash benefits. There is no change with the implementation of EBT.

EBT PILOT PARTICIPANT TRAINING

All EBT pilot district participants were offered training on the use of the EBT (Golden State Advantage) card. Training for Metro East district participants began July 19 and ran continuously from July 21 through July 26 at Plaza del Sol. Training for South Central participants was located at their GROW Site in South Gate and ran from July 22 through July 26, 2003. Final participant attendance counts for Metro East and South Central were 884 and 444, respectively.

The EBT training sessions went smoothly, with staff from the State/Citicorp on hand to conduct training, and BWS staff to assist with greeting, check-in, translation, and troubleshooting. Participants had the option to view the EBT State video in English or Spanish, participate in a question and answer session, and change or practice their PIN, if they so desired. Headsets with audio tapes in other languages were also available.

The overall pilot experience at the training sites will be very valuable in the planning of Rollout. We expect to be able to utilize the lessons learned to augment participation for both training and the over-the-counter homeless EBT card issuances.

REPLACEMENT OF EBT BENEFITS

EBT benefits to the cash and/or Food Stamp account can be replaced for two reasons only:

1. Initial issuance when the following criteria are met:
 - a) It is the **first time** (either at conversion or at approval) the EBT card and PIN are mailed to the participant, **and**
 - b) The EBT card and PIN were not received by the participant, **and**
 - c) The benefits (all or partial) have been accessed by someone other than the participant or alternate cardholder.
2. The participant calls to report the card was lost or stolen. Any benefits accessed prior to the report of the loss or theft **cannot be replaced**. However, if the card is not cancelled **immediately**, any benefits accessed after the lost/stolen card report must be replaced.

Please note that this is a change from the information provided at the EBT Pilot district staff training. The replacement of Food Stamp benefits may **also** be replaced when benefits are accessed after the report of a lost or stolen EBT card.